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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2028  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AR](#) [VE](#)  
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE PRESIDENT'S MARCH 5-6 VISIT TO VENEZUELA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 00288

Classified By: ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR DAN LAWTON  
FOR REASON 1.4 (D)

¶1. (C) Polcouns and Poloff met with Argentine First Secretary Luis Alberto Hidalgo March 7 to discuss Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner's March 5-6 visit to Venezuela, her first to Venezuela since assuming the presidency. Hidalgo said the visit was intended to be low profile, but given the Colombian-Ecuadorian crisis, Fernandez thought it necessary to issue remarks on the situation. During a March 6 ceremony to sign a series of economic and energy accords at the Miraflores Presidential Palace, Fernandez de Kirchner reiterated her support for the OAS resolution regarding Colombia's military operation along its border with Ecuador.

¶2. (C) Hidalgo characterized the energy and economic deals as mutually beneficial. He said his government hopes Venezuela will serve as a steady supplier of gas and oil needed to address Argentina's energy crisis. Argentina, on the other hand, will provide Venezuela with foodstuffs, including dairy products, beef, and wheat. He noted, however, that some Argentine business leaders have expressed concern about the economic risks inherent in doing business in Venezuela. Many investors, for example, see Venezuela as a natural market for Argentine goods but are worried they will face difficulties transferring their profits out of the country due to currency controls. They are also concerned about securing payment from government-owned entities.

¶3. (C) Hidalgo also told us that Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (BRV) officials put Fernandez de Kirchner in tense situations during ideologically charged discourses. In his view, the Argentine president did not line up entirely with BRV officials and instead offered a moderate discourse and tone. For example, on March 6, Libertador Municipality Mayor Freddy Bernal gave a highly ideological speech at the National Pantheon. Fernandez de Kirchner did not follow his lead and opted to re-focus attention on the purpose of her visit. The Argentine president adopted a similar position during the signing of the accords with Chavez. Hidalgo acknowledged Fernandez de Kirchner played to the crowd in that instance, but did not diverge from her message of bolstering economic and energy ties with Venezuela.

¶4. (C) Comment: The Argentine Ambassador to Venezuela's sympathetic stance towards the BRV has made it difficult for Hidalgo to meet with Emboffs on a more regular basis. While it does not appear that Hidalgo shares the same political tendencies as his ambassador, his remarks were designed to portray Fernandez de Kirchner's visit in the best light for a U.S. audience. Moreover, Hidalgo appears willing to engage us on regional and multilateral issues as a way of keeping a

channel of communication open between the Argentine mission  
and the Embassy.

DUDDY